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THE HORRORS OF PEACE

BY EDGAR STANTON MACLAY, A.M.

ADVOCATES of disarmament and universal peace have said and written so much about the "horrors of war" that it will be interesting to inquire what those horrors were and how they compare with the "horrors of peace." It may develop, possibly, that horrors, even greater than those of war, have been avoided by well-fought battles and by the maintenance of an efficient military service.

One of the greatest military disasters in modern history was Napoleon's retreat from Moscow. In truth, it was one of the greatest horrors of war within the ken of man; yet recent research shows that the dreadful features of that campaign have been systematically and persistently exaggerated. It is known that Napoleon started with 400,000 or more men, and that he returned with a mere "remnant," variously estimated from 10,000 to 30,000 men—leaving the inference that the rest of the army perished in the rigors of a Northern winter or were slain by Cossacks and Russian peasants.

This inference has been encouraged by French, German, and Russian painters, who depicted wholesale butcheries of the retreating soldiers. Evidently these artists seized upon extreme instances of inhumanity (and, without doubt, there were such instances), having in view a more satisfactory sale of their canvases. From a business viewpoint these painters were right. With many people there is a craving for the extreme, the unusual, the sensational. Had these artists selected the commonplace incidents of that retreat, their pictures would have been of less financial value, and copies of them would not have been so industriously circulated all over the world by peace advocates—misleading the public into the belief that these unusual instances of horror were the rule rather than the exception, and that of Na-

napoleon's magnificent army of 400,000 or more men only 10,000 to 30,000 survived.

Recent investigation shows that fewer than 20,000 Frenchmen were killed in this entire campaign, and that fewer than 40,000 perished in the cold. A better acquaintance with the Cossacks shows that they were not "blood-thirsty wolves." It would be difficult to find to-day a more simple, kind-hearted class of men in all Europe, and there is every reason to believe that the Cossack of 1814 would be just as hesitant in slaying a defenseless foe as any American soldier of to-day. The Russian peasant has been persistently represented as butchering whole squads of helpless French officers and troops. Undoubtedly there were rare instances in which villagers, roused to fury by outrages perpetrated by the soldiers, slaughtered groups of Napoleon's men; but the very fact that these were exceptional and sensational cases led the artists to seize upon them as subjects for more salable pictures. Like the Cossack, the Russian peasant was imbued with all the natural kind-heartedness so characteristic of Europeans of the "lower class." That they should suddenly become fiendish butchers of defenseless men is as improbable as it is libelous on their well-known disposition for hospitality toward the stranger within their gates.

It is now well established that thousands upon thousands of Napoleon's troops, on being made prisoners by the Russians, were treated humanely. Great numbers of the wounded were taken into peasant homes, carefully nursed, and well provided for. Indeed, thousands of these soldiers were so pleased with the treatment they received from their captors that they remained in the country of their captivity—marrying into Russian families, as is shown by the large number of family names in Muscovy to-day which are unmistakably of French origin. Many other thousands of these French prisoners, after the permanent cessation of hostilities, when they felt sure that they would not again be "conscripted" into French armies, gradually made their way back to France—not much the worse for their detention in the Land of the Czars. In the light of these facts, we can see how the horrors of the Moscow campaign have been monstrously exaggerated.

But, even when divested of its exaggerations, the Russian campaign was a scene of the greatest war horror in modern

history. Yet there have been vastly greater horrors which can be directly attributed to the results of disarmament, which universal peace advocates make no mention of. For centuries the original Chinese and Hindus have been practical advocates of non-preparation for war and for the concentration of their energies in the arts of peace. In the latter effort they have been conspicuously successful, exceeding Europe in many specialties. Centuries ago they discovered gunpowder and reduced it to practical non-military use. They invented the immovable block type; they dressed in silks and fine linen, manufactured the finest porcelains and bronzes, made exquisite embroideries, carved marvelous designs on ivory—but consistently and persistently neglected the art of war. The result has been that for centuries the original Chinese have been the victims of unnumbered foreign invasions which, in most instances, were attended with wholesale butcheries of men, women, and children vastly exceeding in horror any incident of European warfare. It is of record that, in the seventeenth century, one of the cities in southern China was captured by the Manchu invaders, and 800,000 natives were slaughtered in cold blood. The Manchus advocated giving part of their energies to the art of war; the original Chinese advocated the concentration of their energies in the arts of peace.

Even more horrible than these foreign invasions was the devastation wrought in China by famine, plagues, and the practice of infanticide—all the result of over-population. When a race puts aside all preparation for war and concentrates its energies in the walks of peace, the inevitable result has been a rapid increase of population. For centuries China has been subjected to the horrors of a congested population, which periodical famines, plagues, and the practice of infanticide (whereby millions upon millions have been exterminated) have failed to permanently relieve. The horrors of war in western Europe have been many times exceeded by the horrors of peace in eastern Asia.

Without doubt the greatest war horror in which the United States has been involved was that between the North and the South in 1861-65. The following casualty statistics bearing on that struggle are taken from the compilation made by Thomas L. Livermore, of the Military Historical Society of Massachusetts, as published in 1900:

One of the best-known battles of that war was Gettysburg, in which 3,155 Northerners and 3,903 Southerners were killed, a total of 7,058. During the half-century following the Civil War there have been many times that total of men, women, and children killed in railway and street-car accidents. Indeed, if peace advocates will as elaborately compile the total of railway fatalities in the United States since 1865, it will be found that the "horrors of railroading" exceed all the "horrors" of the Civil War—and these "horrors of peace" are being repeated many times every year. We have celebrated the hundred years of peace between the United States and Great Britain—a peace made possible by two hard-fought wars between these nations. When will the advocates of peace celebrate a hundred years (or even one year) of no "railway horrors" in the United States?

In the desperate fighting at Chickamauga, September 19, 20, 1863, the Federals had 1,657 killed, and the Confederates 2,312, or a total of 3,969—a figure that by no means is equal to the number of men, women, and children who, in the last fifty years, have lost their lives amid the "horrors of aquatic pleasures" like boating, fishing, swimming, and yachting.

In the two days' battle of Antietam, 2,108 Northerners and 2,700 Southerners were killed; total 4,808—a smaller number of men than those who have perished in coal and metal mine disasters in the United States since 1865. In the seven days' battle of June 25 to July 1, 1862, the Unionists had 1,734 killed and the Confederates 3,478; total, 5,212. More than that number of men, women, and children have perished during the last half-century in Sunday-school picnic and church-structure disasters. At the battle of Fair Oaks the Northerners had 790 killed and the Southerners 980, total 1,770; which by no means surpasses the number of young Americans killed in athletic games (collegiate and professional) since 1865.

Mr. Livermore has computed the total fatalities of the Civil War as follows: total number of Unionists killed, mortally wounded, or died of disease, 359,528; and of Confederates, 153,297! making a grand total of 512,825. A ghastly summary, and one that may well be described as one of the greatest horrors in modern history. It meant that there were thousands upon thousands of newly created

widows, and thousands upon thousands of fatherless children in the United States, suffering all the attendant and consequent miseries resulting from a violent severance of the tenderest of human ties. It must not be forgotten, however, that from the close of the Civil War to this day an even more ghastly total has been added up, a greater number of widows have been created and a much larger number of innocent children have been rendered fatherless or motherless in the "horrors" of our divorce courts. From 1867 to 1906 a total of 1,274,341 divorces were granted in the United States. This means that 2,548,682 American husbands and wives have been arrayed against one another in legal battles for the "violent severance of the tenderest of human ties." The half-million of men who sacrificed their lives in the Civil War were contending over a great principle of government and the question of slavery. The records of our divorce courts show that eighty-eight per cent. of these two and a half million husbands and wives were contending over questions of cruelty, desertion, adultery, and drunkenness. Which is the more deplorable, the "horrors of the Civil War" or the "horrors of our divorce courts"?

In the history of the United States Navy we find that the horrors of war were reduced to a minimum, while the material benefits to this country and world-wide civilization—as a result of the achievements of American sea forces—reached the maximum. It has been clearly demonstrated that, without the assistance of American and French sea-power, our struggle for independence would have been greatly prolonged if not permanently baffled. It was solely by means of our swift-sailing craft (manned by the most daring and skilful seamen of their day) that American produce was carried to the West Indies and Europe, exchanged for indispensable military supplies, and those supplies brought back to the United States. It was solely by means of our sea forces that American agents were able to reach Europe, plead the cause of the Colonies, and raise loans for carrying on the struggle.

It was the American sea-fighter who carried the war into the enemy's country, throwing their coasts into alarm and causing unprecedented losses to the all-powerful English mercantile classes. Fully 800 English vessels were captured, more than 10,000 British seamen, and 1,000 English

and German troops were made prisoners on the high seas. All these vitally important services were accomplished with the loss of only 474 men killed in the Continental Navy, which was composed of about three thousand officers and enlisted men. This would be an average of 68 men killed in each of the seven years of the war—a death-rate considerably below that arising from natural causes.

In the two and a half years' war against France, all the work was done by the navy—and most important work it was. Had not French depredations on American commerce been firmly checked, the development of our new nation would have been seriously impeded. Since the close of that war, France has not materially interfered with American commerce. In that struggle our navy was engaged in eight sea fights, in which a total of 24 Americans were killed in a service employing about 2,000 officers and men. It is more than probable that a larger number of Americans in private life, in this same two and a half years, were killed through accidents in saw-mills, in felling trees, hunting, or fishing.

In the four years of our navy's operations against the piratical states of Barbary, the total number of Americans killed was 53, or an average of 14 for each year of the war. As a direct result of these operations a death-blow was given to a system of white slavery which had disgraced Europe for centuries. Even in the then short career of the United States, hundreds of American men, women, and children had been subjected to the horrors of Mussulman bondage, while untold thousands of Christians had been held in hopeless captivity. Thirty thousand Christian slaves, under a burning sun and negro task-masters, were engaged for twenty years in building the mole in the harbor of Algiers. Surely the horrors of peace with those piratical states were vastly more horrible than the horrors of our four years' war against them.

The war of 1812-15 may justly be called the "war for the maintenance of American independence." Although nothing was mentioned in the Treaty of Ghent about Great Britain's "right" to interfere with American vessels on the high seas, it is significant that for the succeeding hundred years we have had little cause for complaint on that point, and in all that period the American commercial flag has been duly respected by civilized nations in every part of the navigable globe. Also it is significant that from 1815

our commerce entered upon an era of prosperity which at the beginning of the Civil War made the United States the second commercial power of the world. Not only did this war firmly establish our commercial position among the nations of the earth, but it prevented Great Britain from carrying out her well-defined plan of confining the United States east of the Mississippi and the Great Lakes. British operations on Lakes Champlain, Ontario, and Erie, and, finally, the naval and land attacks on New Orleans, were undertaken with the avowed purpose of merging the Canadas and Louisiana into one vast domain, thereby cutting the United States off from the great West.

That our sea forces were the principal factors in frustrating this far-reaching scheme must be admitted by any fair-minded person who impartially considers the situation. Disaster after disaster overwhelmed our land forces, while a most unexpected series of brilliant victories was won by our sea forces, both on the ocean and on inland waters. That England then regarded the Great Lakes as belonging exclusively to her is shown in the following extract from the London *Times* of November 18, 1813:

We must again and again call upon them [the ministers] to make arrangements for retrieving the temporary subversion of our superiority on the American lakes. They are a portion of our marine dominion which must on no account be yielded.

In this war the navy, manned by about 5,000 men, was engaged in thirty-one battles, and had a total of 313 men killed, or an average of 105 for each of the three years of the struggle—which is considerably below the normal death-rate for that number of men under peace conditions. There have been flood disasters in the United States whereby more lives were lost than the total fatalities in both the American and British land and sea forces engaged in the War of 1812.

In the Mexican War the United States Navy was engaged in thirteen battles on land and sea, sustaining a total loss of only 54 killed in a force of about 4,000 men. It was principally through the energetic efforts of Captains Thomas ap Catesby Jones, John Drake Sloat, and Robert Field Stockton, and the sailors and marines under them, that that enormous territory now occupied by the States of California, Washington, Oregon, Idaho, Nevada, Utah, Arizona, and New Mexico became part of the United States. Captain Sloat took possession of the harbor of Monterey only a

few days before Admiral Sir George F. Seymour arrived there in the 80-gun ship of the line *Collingwood* on the same errand.

In the four years of the Civil War our navy, manned by 55,000 men, was engaged in 67 battles, and sustained a total loss of 943 men killed, or an average of less than 250 for each year of the war. Many ocean-steamship horrors have occurred since 1865 which represent a larger loss of human life. The Civil War settled a great principle of government and brought about the abolition of slavery in the United States. Without the assistance of our sea forces, it may well be doubted if the North could have prevented the disruption of the Union.

More than 130,000 square miles of territory came under the control of the United States as a result of the war with Spain, the total number of men killed in our navy being only 16 out of the 60,000 engaged. The number of automobile fatalities in this country in the year 1898 exceeded the total number of Americans, in army or navy, killed in the Spanish War.

From the foregoing it must be evident that the "horrors" of war have been greatly exceeded by the "horrors of peace." While due prominence has been given to the latter at the time of their occurrence, the tendency on the part of the public has been to forget them, or at least to recall them with diminishing thrill as time passes. As to the horrors of war, a number of circumstances have united in keeping them prominently before the people. It is natural for the man returning from war to recount the perils and privations he has been through. As a rule, the men who were actually on the firing-line have been modest, moderate, and even reticent in their narratives. Not so, however, with their friends, relatives, and business or political associates. A good war record always has proved a valuable and legitimate personal asset. In all countries and in all ages it has given the returned hero a well-earned and properly accorded distinction in commercial, professional, ecclesiastical, social, and all other circles; and, very naturally and commendably, his friends see to it that the horrors of war shall be kept before the public with as much of their original freshness as possible.

Ablly seconding these worthy efforts are the artists, novelists, and narrators of war, who, recognizing the public taste

for the sensational, have seized upon extreme instances as their subjects—in some cases “coloring” them beyond actualities. The portrayal of the many less repulsive features of war would not be as profitable, financially, as the “limit of horror” scenes.

Now that we have organized societies advocating disarmament and universal peace—some of them endowed with a million dollars or more and paying desirable salaries to their agents—we can expect that the horrors of war will be paraded on a larger and more horror-inspiring scale than ever before. We will arrive at a clearer comprehension of the situation, however, if we keep in mind that all these powerful agencies for keeping the dark side of war fresh in the public mind are almost wholly lacking in recording the many times more numerous and greater horrors of peace. It is further to be remembered that our horrors of war arose in struggles for some principle of government—liberty, religion, social and political equality, for the defense of homes against foreign invasion, for the acquisition of more territory for a great and growing people, or for some definite objective looking to the permanent good of the nation.

Were the half-million men who lost their lives in the Civil War sacrificed in vain when that struggle resulted in the Union remaining intact and the wiping out of human slavery in the United States? Northern women and children who suffered the keenest anguish, through the loss of husbands, sons, brothers, and fathers in that war, would be the first to declare that they would make the sacrifice again for such a cause. Could such a noble answer be expected of the thousands upon thousands of women and children who have lost husbands, sons, brothers, and parents in mining and steamboat disasters?

The American public does not feel that the comparatively small number of men who have perished in all our wars have been sacrificed in vain when great principles have been maintained and territory has been acquired in which to spread a higher civilization. The horrors of peace have resulted in a vastly greater loss of life and the entailment of immeasurably greater domestic sorrow than the horrors of war—and all this without the saving grace of having attained a distinct national advance or advantage.

It is far from the purpose of this article to advocate war or to minimize its horrors. War is horrible, and no class of men

has pronounced more emphatically against it than those who have been actively engaged in it. Sherman said, "War is hell"; Grant exclaimed, "Let us have peace"; and the great Farragut wrote, "I would that wars ceased forever." When Decatur boarded the British frigate *Macedonian*, after the naval battle of October 25, 1812, he witnessed "a scene so horrible of my fellow-creatures, I assure you, deprived me very much of the pleasure of victory." It is contended, however, that so far back as the knowledge of man goes, wars have occurred, and that, so long as there is nothing to justify the belief that wars will cease in the immediate future,¹ earnest attention should be given to the most scientific, advanced, and complete preparation for immediate war in order to insure the continued advance of the world's highest civilization. Even the peace-loving Puritans and Quakers so far overcame their scruples as to take up arms and forcibly sweep the savages of North America from the paths of progress.

We must not close our eyes to the fact that there are fewer than thirty million square miles of land suitable for the support of mankind on this globe. Centuries of experience show that this land will not support more than an average of 100 persons per square mile; so the world's population would seem to be limited to three thousand millions. Already the earth's population exceeds half this limit. If all nations are to cease preparations for war and concentrate their energies in the pursuit of peace and happiness, the world's population will be more than three thousand millions in a single generation.

Obviously, if the world's population is not kept down by war, it must be restricted by other means. It is for the advocates of disarmament and universal peace to decide whether or not war is more horrible than the practice of infanticide, the burial alive of widows with their deceased husbands (now modified by the prohibition of widows marrying again), the periodical extermination of millions of men, women, and children by ruthless foreign invaders or by famine, pestilence, and floods, or by the wholesale prevention of children before they have had a chance to demonstrate their fitness to survive.

¹ This article was written before there was any indication of the present European outbreaks.